



## **PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT SUMMARY DECEMBER 1, 2003 - JANUARY 16, 2004**

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### **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

Washington State Ferries (WSF) is beginning an environmental review process to examine potential alternatives for improving the Keystone and Port Townsend Ferry Terminals. WSF seeks to improve existing services along this route, including operational reliability, schedule, and improved safety. The 76-year old Steel Electric vessels currently serving the Keystone – Port Townsend ferry route are scheduled for retirement. They will be replaced in the next few years with the Issaquah 130 class vessel or other vessel with similar characteristics that are interchangeable throughout the WSF system. The Keystone Harbor and Terminal and the Port Townsend Terminal as they exist today cannot accommodate a larger vessel. Low tides have historically caused schedule disruptions on this route even with smaller vessels. Substantial modification to Keystone Harbor itself and modification or relocation of the Keystone Ferry Terminal are necessary to accommodate replacement vessels for the aging ferries.

### **PURPOSE OF SCOPING**

Public involvement is critical to a successful environmental process. The purpose of scoping is to allow the public, agencies and interested parties to comment on the breadth or “scope” of issues to be addressed during the environmental review. Examples of scoping comments include potential impacts to the environment or traffic and any areas of concern to local residents and business owners. The scoping period, which ran from December 1, 2003 to January 16, 2004, was advertised in the following ways:

- ✓ Mailed 8,700 notices to residences and businesses in Port Townsend and select areas of Whidbey Island, and other identified parties
- ✓ Scoping notice in Seattle Times and Seattle Post Intelligencer
- ✓ Display advertisement in local papers
- ✓ Public scoping meetings – December 16 and 17, 2003
- ✓ Project website
- ✓ E-mail alert sent to WSF’s list for the Keystone-Port Townsend route
- ✓ Press release

### **MECHANISMS TO PROVIDE PUBLIC COMMENT**

WSF made available several methods to the public to provide comment during the scoping period, including e-mail ([keystone-ptproject@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:keystone-ptproject@wsdot.wa.gov)), on-line comment form ([http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/improvement\\_projects/pt-key/](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/improvement_projects/pt-key/)), December 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> public meetings comment forms, and comment response cards from the scoping notice mailing.



## **Public Scoping Meetings**

WSF held two public scoping meetings in 2003 on December 16 (Coupeville) and December 17 (Port Townsend). Over 125 people attended the two public meetings, which ran from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The purpose of these meetings was to inform communities on both sides of the Keystone-Port Townsend ferry route of the start of the environmental review process and to receive feedback on the project.

The public was notified of the meetings in several ways, including:

- ✓ Mailed 8,700 notices to residences and business in Port Townsend and select areas of Whidbey Island, and other identified parties
- ✓ Display advertisement in local papers
- ✓ Insert in local papers
- ✓ Project website
- ✓ Public school reader boards
- ✓ Windermere Real Estate reader board
- ✓ Notice at Keystone and Port Townsend Ferry Terminals
- ✓ Legal Notice in Seattle Times and Seattle Post-Intelligencer
- ✓ E-mail alert sent to WSF's list for the Keystone-Port Townsend route
- ✓ Press releases and coverage in local papers

The format of the public meetings was identical both evenings. Staffed stations focused on the following topics: general information, screening criteria, area description, and next steps. Copies of the display boards and Purpose and Need Statement were available as handouts. The first hour of the public meeting was structured as an open house where the public could visit the information stations and converse with project team members. From 7:00 p.m. forward there was a project presentation followed by a question and answer period. See Appendix B for a list of questions/issues raised during this portion of both public meetings.

Participants commented at the public meetings primarily by writing down comments and/or verbally providing comments to a court reporter. Comment stations allowed participants to sit down and fill out a comment form. A court reporter was also available to take verbal comments. Participants were provided with the project e-mail and mailing addresses and the project website, so they could provide comment following the public meeting.

## **Procedure**

WSF will consider and respond to public comments during the environmental review process. The general process for receiving and responding to public comment is as follows:

1. Comment is received and read by WSF.
2. A general e-mail or mail reply is sent to each comment to acknowledge receipt unless the comment requires a specific response.



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3. Text of comment and contact information of commenter is entered into project database. Categories are assigned to each comment.
4. Comments are summarized and provided to project team for review and preparation of environmental document.

#### **SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED**

The project received 240 comments from December 1, 2003 to January 16, 2004. The table below breaks down the comments received by format.

| <b>COMMENT<br/>FORMAT</b>      | <b>TOTAL NO.<br/>COMMENTS<br/>RECEIVED</b> | <b>WHIDBEY IS. –<br/>NO. COMMENTS<br/>RECEIVED</b> | <b>PORT TOWNSEND –<br/>NO. COMMENT<br/>RECEIVED</b> | <b>OTHER AREA –<br/>NO. COMMENTS<br/>RECEIVED<sup>*</sup></b> |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| E-MAIL                         | 88   | 22   | 11  | 55  |
| PUBLIC MEETING<br>COMMENT FORM | 60   | 29   | 9   | 22  |
| MAIL                           | 92   | 27   | 37  | 28  |

To read the full text of each comment received between December 1, 2003 and January 16, 2004, please see Appendix A.

Among the comments received, five themes were prevalent (in order of frequency):

- Wildlife and Vegetation (82 references)
- Type of Vessel Used on this Route by Washington State Ferries (81 references)
- Parks and Recreation (66 references)
- Local Transit/Traffic (65 references)
- Vehicle Holding (52 references)

This summary also discusses the category, “New Alternative,” due to its significance to the scoping process and public reference at the December scoping meetings. Eleven references to a new alternative were noted in scoping comments.

The following are examples of comments received in each category.

#### **Wildlife and Vegetation**

Environmental concerns came from many different angles. Most focused on preservation of the current ecosystem with emphasis on the Keystone Spit, maintaining the tide gate between

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<sup>\*</sup> “Other Area,” refers to comments received that list no address in the project area.



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Keystone Harbor and Crockett Lake, and bird habitat. A few comments suggested that a changed ecosystem could adapt. Below is a selection of these comments.

*"There is nothing out there past the end of the jetty except for small rocks. In other words, you won't be crushing any special reef out there if you lengthen the jetty. Granted, there will be damage to the critters living at the existing jetty, but they'll grow back." (#248)*

*"Some are afraid moving the terminal will disturb the birds. The birds were there long before that terminal and I'm sure will remain." (#69)*

*"Important to preserve the eel grass beds in Port Townsend Bay." (#10)*

*"If either of the two areas, central or east are implemented the ecosystem that exists throughout the Crockett Lake area to the beach of Admiralty Inlet would be changed forever. From the large birds of prey such as the Bald Eagles to the smallest of the rodents that many birds of prey feed on. As well as the fish and their predators, including the porpoises, seals, and orcas that pass through these waters." [sic] (#94)*

*"I am extremely concerned about impact on wetlands in the Central Alternative. No matter where the parking lot is placed the whole area will be impacted. Restoration is extremely difficult and should be an important consideration." (#107)*

### **Type of Vessel**

The most common reference to the type of vessel was a general one, with some specific comments addressing the switch from Steel Electric vessels to the Issaquah Class-130 vessels. Comments ranged from questioning the need for a larger boat on the route to stating that a vessel change is necessary with consideration given to the environment, to advising on the design and appearance of the new vessels. Overall, comments acknowledged that modernization is necessary on this run. Below is a selection of comments reflecting the type of vessel used on the Keystone-Port Townsend route:

Supportive of a larger, interchangeable vessel:

*"As a commuter on the Keystone/Port Townsend ferry 3 times per week, I wholeheartedly support the need for larger ferries, fewer people in line, waiting for ferries for hours, etc. Please make it happen quickly." (#21)*

*"We use the Keystone/Port Townsend ferry quite often and feel the change in the type/size of ferry used to be an issue long overdue for updating." (#54)*

Qualified support of the new vessel:

*"I would support a larger harbor and ferry as long as the natural beauty of the area was maintained. It is critical to this area to maintain a low impact, yet I realize we need to move ahead with the times and upgrade our service." (#114)*



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*"I can understand the need for a more efficient/bigger ferry and one that can be used elsewhere as needed." (#116)*

Opposition to a larger, standardized vessel:

*"I perceive the environmental impact to out weigh the possible benefit. It also will impact quality of life-don't need or want jumbo ferry service!" (#23)*

*"[T]he driving force and assumption behind the terminal relocation is that these boats will be the Issaquah 130 Class. Because there has been no environmental review of this decision, the scope of alternatives is being improperly limited; it must also include new shallow-draft and small boats." (#136)*

### **Parks and Recreation:**

Parks and recreation is a category that received many comments. The comments addressed this category in terms of how potential alternative sites are currently used and could be potentially altered, as well as how both terminals are currently used recreationally. Below is a selection of these comments.

Current Keystone Terminal:

*"If you decide to abandon Keystone Harbor in favor of the open beach area to the east, then please see that jetties and breakwaters now in place, can and will be left in place for transient pleasure boat moorage and tie-up, that is badly needed on the west side of Whidbey Island." (#11)*

*"Go any day of the week, and you will most likely see many scuba divers getting ready to go into the water. Losing or altering the jetty would not only disrupt the multiple species who call that jetty home, but would also remove a valuable recreational site." (#150)*

Keystone Alternative Site (Central):

*"Our children are free to run or to ride their bicycles in the street without fear of constant traffic, to feed the numerous ducks, to row inflatable rafts on the two potholes ponds by the park, or to play on the quiet beach without fear of "strangers" trespassing on our property which the ferry would inevitably bring." (#159)*

*"The disruption of the ferry traffic and the taking of the [Driftwood County] Park will eliminate fabulous access for sports fishermen and people who fish to eat. Fishing from the shore for a prize salmon for those of us without boat access is an aesthetic and recreational loss." (#64)*

Port Townsend Terminal:

*"[I] recommend maintaining Rotary Park and US Bank drop off-parking area (West of Bank) [and] Possible purchase of Indian Point for public property as mitigation would be a real benefit." (#121)*



## Local Traffic Impacts

Many comments from both sides of the Keystone-Port Townsend ferry route addressed the adverse effect of higher capacity vessels and less frequent runs on local traffic, the need for increased vehicle holding and the lack of adequate space for additional holding. Comments from Whidbey Island interests discussed traffic impacts associated with the new potential alternative sites for the Keystone Terminal. Below are examples of those comments:

Keystone traffic:

*"We don't need bigger interchangeable ferries on this run. We don't need lots of big trucks to clog up the roads and run over our pets."* (#37)

*"I do think you should avoid a bobble like the past routing in Hwy 20 making it 7.5 miles further than direct in on Engle Rd."* (#29)

Traffic associated with the Keystone central site option:

*"The current ferry terminal is on the highway. You are bringing the highway to our street by doing this. Our street will be the drop-off and pick-up points for walk-ons, and side street parking where now kids ride bikes and people walk looking for eagles, herons, and marsh hawks - seen daily from all of our homes. ... Keep high traffic areas with all of the environmental impact of pollutants and run-offs contained in one area and not spread throughout."* (#64)

Port Townsend traffic:

*"Traffic management and the related mitigation of traffic impacts would result in at least two key shoreline issues: the ferry traffic management plan and its related capital improvements; and shoreline impacts relating to terminal expansion and traffic mitigation."* (#132)

*"We do not need reduced service! We need runs at 45-minute intervals. You will not do that with 130 class ferries. You will fill downtown Port Townsend with cars waiting for the ferry."* (#130)

## Holding Areas

Many comments referenced increased or altered holding areas in Keystone and/or Port Townsend. Concerns focused on the increased number of cars waiting for each sailing with increased vessel holding capacity. The following are examples of holding area concerns:

*"By reducing sailings to one sailing every 1.5 hours as proposed by WSF, there are two important consequences: Service is reduced 50% and the need for vehicle parking doubles. This parking needs to be upland to avoid paving an entire shoreline or building a pier the size of an oil tanker."* (#65)



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*“Of greatest concern is the need for additional ferry holding that a larger vessel would require.” (#132)*

*“Please take into consideration not only parking for drive-on vehicles, but also for walk-on parking. This can be a huge impact during the summer months.” (#110)*

### New Alternative:

Twelve comments suggested new alternative sites in addition to the proposed alternative sites. A couple comments, example below, suggested the project look at the vicinity of the former target range, which is also called the Lake Hancock Nature Preserve, owned by Naval Air Station Whidbey and managed by multiple interests.

*“There is an old US Navy bombing range one mile north of Greenbank, WA, on the west side of Whidbey Island. There is a small lagoon on the shore of the range. The shoreline is only 300 to 500 yards from Hwy 525. I checked out the water depth with my boat and it is 40 feet deep right up to within 100 yards of the shore.” (#179)*

### Other Categories

The scoping comments addressed many other categories. The following table lists each category that was addressed during the scoping period as well as the number of comments received pertaining to each category and the associated comment number. Please see Appendix A for the text of each comment.

| CATEGORY                        | NO. OF REFERENCES | COMMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS  |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| New Keystone Terminal (Central) | 48                | 11, 54, 64, 66, 75, 80, 99, 101, 104, 107, 109, 112, 118, 131, 137, 142, 143, 144, 147, 150, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 166, 173, 174, 176, 182, 204, 206, 207, 209, 210, 211, 215, 216, 221, 228, 233, 236, 237, 239, 253, 255, 256, 257, 258 |
| Funding/Costs                   | 47                | 3, 11, 15, 16, 28, 31, 32, 37, 51, 52, 65, 74, 75, 76, 82, 83, 92, 99, 104, 107, 115, 130, 132, 133, 149, 155, 166, 169, 173, 176, 177, 192, 196, 198, 200, 204, 211, 216, 218, 228, 231, 236, 239, 244, 245, 246, 253, 260, 263                            |
| Fisheries                       | 44                | 30, 55, 64, 82, 87, 93, 94, 96, 101, 102, 118, 135, 137, 142, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 164, 166, 172, 173, 176, 180, 196, 204, 205, 206, 208, 210, 219, 223, 224, 225, 233, 234, 239, 242, 252, 257, 262                                     |
| Crockett Lake                   | 43                | 32, 45, 50, 54, 55, 65, 69, 73, 75, 77, 87, 94, 95, 96, 97, 102, 103, 116, 118, 120, 153, 172, 173, 180, 187, 191, 193, 194, 197, 200, 204, 207, 208, 228, 236, 237, 239, 240, 242, 243, 248, 251   |
| Ferry Frequency/Schedule        | 43                | 6, 16, 21, 26, 43, 48, 52, 55, 65, 74, 75, 86, 104, 108,  |



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| CATEGORY  | NO. OF REFERENCES | COMMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS  |
|---|-------------------|---|
|   |                   | 112, 119, 122, 129, 130, 131, 147, 148, 149, 153, 168, 169, 172, 174, 183, 186, 194, 195, 198, 204, 207, 209, 228, 231, 239, 244, 248, 253, 255, 260  |
| New Terminal and Access Road to SR 525 (East)     | 41                | 11, 32, 50, 54, 55, 75, 80, 99, 101, 102, 103, 104, 107, 108, 109, 111, 112, 115, 118, 131, 137, 147, 150, 151, 153, 174, 180, 193, 194, 205, 207, 218, 219, 226, 236, 237, 238, 239, 248, 249, 253 |
| Historic, Cultural and Archeological              | 40                | 27, 37, 64, 65, 69, 87, 92, 93, 96, 104, 114, 115, 121, 127, 137, 155, 159, 161, 172, 178, 186, 187, 191, 196, 200, 215, 216, 218, 221, 223, 228, 236, 237, 238, 243, 244, 245, 246, 253, 258       |
| Increased number of vehicles                      | 39                | 8, 10, 12, 37, 44, 55, 64, 98, 99, 111, 113, 117, 122, 128, 129, 130, 132, 142, 157, 158, 161, 178, 186, 194, 195, 196, 206, 212, 214, 215, 219, 223, 230, 234, 235, 242, 253, 255                  |
| Pedestrian/Bicycle                                | 36                | 4, 10, 42, 44, 65, 73, 86, 108, 110, 117, 127, 131, 153, 172, 177, 183, 186, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 200, 205, 209, 210, 213, 214, 219, 231, 234, 235, 237, 248, 250, 265                          |
| Economics   | 35                | 3, 24, 43, 47, 92, 93, 104, 109, 127, 129, 131, 135, 143, 154, 158, 159, 162, 165, 173, 177, 178, 186, 187, 191, 204, 207, 213, 214, 217, 218, 231, 235, 236, 254                                   |
| Ferry Reliability                                 | 35                | 6, 11, 13, 48, 65, 69, 72, 75, 86, 97, 104, 108, 119, 123, 129, 134, 148, 153, 169, 176, 180, 185, 195, 206, 222, 231, 236, 244, 245, 246, 249, 251, 253, 255                                       |
| Visual Impact                                     | 33                | 33, 55, 64, 70, 77, 78, 86, 87, 92, 96, 98, 107, 109, 114, 137, 147, 151, 154, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 200, 206, 233, 234, 236, 237, 257, 265   |
| Proximity to SR 20/525                            | 33                | 7, 8, 29, 51, 55, 86, 90, 99, 102, 103, 118, 143, 165, 177, 179, 187, 193, 200, 204, 206, 213, 217, 219, 234, 235, 236, 237, 239, 242, 243, 253, 255, 265   |
| Modify existing Keystone Harbor & Terminal (West) | 32                | 11, 13, 15, 17, 25, 51, 64, 80, 84, 98, 104, 109, 114, 131, 137, 147, 172, 173, 177, 187, 204, 207, 219, 221, 236, 237, 239, 253, 255, 256, 257, 258  |
| Way of Life                                       | 30                | 37, 52, 64, 92, 98, 99, 104, 108, 114, 117, 137, 142, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 166, 178, 211, 220, 221, 223, 228, 233, 254  |
| Wetlands  | 30                | 64, 93, 99, 101, 107, 154, 164, 172, 173, 176, 177, 200, 205, 206, 207, 208, 212, 219, 223, 224, 225, 228, 236, 239, 240, 242, 243, 248, 257  |
| Displacements/property acquisition                | 26                | 3, 69, 87, 92, 98, 104, 109, 112, 121, 135, 143, 144, 147, 154, 162, 173, 187, 191, 200, 204, 210, 215, 233, 234, 236   |
| Public Involvement                                | 24                | 28, 32, 60, 65, 66, 73, 92, 100, 105, 129, 133, 134, 149, 165, 171, 186, 193, 194, 196, 213, 214, 229, 234, 258,  |





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| CATEGORY                               | NO. OF REFERENCES | COMMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS  |
|--|-------------------|---|
|  |                   | 261   |
| Improve Public Safety                  | 23                | 6, 37, 72, 99, 104, 115, 118, 148, 150, 153, 162, 166, 195, 196, 198, 206, 219, 228, 230, 237, 244, 252 |
| Hydraulics (e.g. beach erosion)        | 22                | 55, 65, 69, 74, 95, 99, 120, 153, 172, 173, 180, 187, 191, 200, 206, 225, 234, 239, 242, 243, 251, 255  |
| Social                                 | 20                | 65, 86, 101, 104, 117, 118, 137, 142, 155, 157, 159, 160, 161, 178, 192, 205, 209, 215, 219, 220        |
| Screening Criteria                     | 18                | 64, 86, 92, 93, 94, 96, 99, 104, 107, 108, 109, 127, 151, 219, 224, 225, 231, 239                       |
| Noise and Vibration                    | 17                | 10, 64, 98, 117, 142, 154, 158, 161, 162, 164, 166, 200, 206, 207, 228, 233, 239                        |
| Vehicle ingress/egress/turnaround      | 13                | 4, 65, 86, 90, 92, 99, 103, 118, 121, 178, 193, 206, 234  |
| Design and Construction                | 12                | 33, 102, 165, 178, 180, 181, 185, 196, 200, 208, 234, 255   |
| Coordination with other area projects  | 11                | 2, 42, 43, 128, 129, 132, 165, 183, 213, 214, 231   |
| Hydrology                              | 11                | 55, 93, 99, 101, 102, 173, 187, 191, 225, 234, 251  |
| EA/EIS                                 | 11                | 86, 129, 136, 187, 219, 224, 225, 236, 239, 242, 255  |
| Endangered Species                     | 10                | 64, 135, 154, 155, 158, 177, 204, 206, 224, 225   |
| Water Quality                          | 10                | 64, 173, 176, 177, 193, 200, 206, 207, 219, 225   |
| Participating Agencies                 | 9                 | 186, 187, 207, 208, 217, 219, 234, 236, 253   |
| Plans and Policies                     | 9                 | 132, 178, 187, 195, 207, 219, 234, 254, 258   |
| Right of Way                           | 8                 | 103, 118, 129, 153, 173, 178, 195, 235  |
| Ebey's Landing Historic Reserve        | 8                 | 87, 94, 96, 207, 218, 232, 236, 237   |
| Hazardous Materials                    | 8                 | 172, 177, 200, 206, 219, 237, 242, 244  |
| Purpose and Need                       | 8                 | 5, 86, 92, 108, 115, 136, 149, 254  |
| Utilities                              | 7                 | 3, 64, 86, 117, 200, 234, 237   |
| Additional Option for Keystone         | 6                 | 7, 93, 94, 99, 179, 193   |
| Additional Option for Port Townsend    | 6                 | 18, 24, 28, 36, 113, 234  |
| Air Quality                            | 6                 | 10, 158, 200, 206, 233, 234   |
| Transit                                | 5                 | 183, 186, 193, 226, 227   |
| Modify existing Port Townsend Terminal | 5                 | 53, 80, 234, 236, 237, 255  |
| Groundwater                            | 4                 | 69, 173, 194, 234   |
| Legal Action                           | 4                 | 65, 171, 187, 219   |
| Geology and Soils                      | 2                 | 99, 242   |
| Environmental Justice                  | 1                 | 239   |
| Freight                                | 1                 | 217   |
| Energy                                 | 0                 | N/A   |